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Chairman: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)
Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 124: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*) (A/60/6 (Introduction), A/60/6 (Sect. 1-27), A/60/6 (Sect. 28A-G), A/60/6 (Sect. 29-35), A/60/6 (Income sect. 1-3))

General discussion (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Patterson** (United States of America) said that at the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, the world's leaders had acknowledged the need for the United Nations to review the mandates originating from General Assembly resolutions in order to identify ways of avoiding duplication and reducing waste. It was critical that the Organization move forward quickly with that process and that the programme budget for the biennium 2006-07 include the costs of the important management reforms approved in the Summit Outcome.

2. The United States believed that the concept of a "unitary United Nations" provided a useful analytical framework for making the difficult decisions on how best to give coherence and rationality to the United Nations system, as well as a basis upon which to deal with the system on budgetary and policy grounds. The concept was also useful because it was important to see how all functions and programmes in the system related to each other and, more importantly, to the Organization's core functions.

3. Over the years the Organization had assumed a Byzantine complexity as activities, committees and institutional entities had proliferated. Duplication, overlap and inefficiencies had too often been the expensive result of a lack of coordination in programme planning and implementation. The United States was fully aware that many of the Organization's substantive interests were best served by pluralism. However, there was a clear need for a central coordinating mechanism to serve as an informational and policy clearing house aimed primarily at ensuring consistency.

4. In implementing the "unitary United Nations" concept, Member States would need to be far more assertive in guiding and setting the policy agenda of agencies. Too often, coordination difficulties and agencies' ineffectiveness were directly attributable to Member States' willingness to allow agencies free rein. That culture must be changed. Governments, especially major contributors, must exercise their collective voice in providing policy direction to the agencies. In that regard, the United States proposed that a consultative mechanism should be established in New York to bring relevant parties together. Such a mechanism would greatly facilitate the mandate-review process agreed to in the Summit Outcome.

5. If the mandate review and other reforms were not implemented, the United States would find it very difficult to reach agreement on the budget proposal before the Committee. By applying the "unitary United Nations" concept, the United States had already identified a number of specific instances of duplication or of areas in which efficiency could be improved by rationalizing certain agencies and functions.

6. While the United States welcomed the consolidation of the United Nations Information Centres in Europe, the streamlining process must continue elsewhere. Since United Nations Headquarters was located in New York City, the Committee should consider whether continued spending on Centres in North America was justified. The activities of the Centres should also be consolidated in other regions, to the maximum extent possible, and the Organization should fully exploit technological advances that would make public information functions more efficient and effective.

7. The number of scheduled meetings should be reduced initially by at least 5 per cent. Meetings should start and end on time and there should be a realistic assessment of the frequency and duration of the meetings needed to accomplish goals. Intersessional meetings of main or subordinate bodies should be funded through voluntary contributions, or not held at all. The marginally useful Committee on Conferences should be eliminated, and the Secretariat must exploit technological advances to reduce the number and cost of meetings.

8. For reasons that remained unclear, the Secretary-General had not fully used the authority given to him in 2003 to redeploy up to 50 posts from lower to higher priority areas. Since the Secretary-General should have the same authority as the chief executive officer of any large organization, the United States proposed to give him the broad authority to redeploy posts and resources in the 2006-2007 budget. There should also be greater

reliance on outsourcing to the private sector for resources such as translation or photocopying. With respect to the proposal to lift the freeze on the hiring of General Service staff, the United States believed that the freeze should be extended, and not lifted until critical reforms were actually in place. More broadly, the Secretariat should quantify the savings made when proposing outputs for deletion.

9. The practice of giving certain expert members of United Nations bodies an additional subsistence allowance should be discontinued, and the General Assembly should consider using videoconferencing and other communication technologies to the maximum extent possible. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) should be phased out, because its donors had lost confidence in its ability to provide relevant services in an economical manner. The General Assembly should also work to rationalize the use of consultants, ensuring that they were not used as a replacement or substitute for posts, and should consider consolidating the multiple United Nations liaison offices in North America and Europe.

10. The Organization's information and communication technologies (ICT) should be thoroughly reviewed. Organizations, departments and offices should not be purchasing separate systems that were incompatible with each other, and the strategy should allow for greater productivity and easier communication. Rationalization of ICT could also help achieve rigorous scrutiny of United Nations publications and how they were distributed, as called for by the Advisory Committee.

11. She noted that the budget proposal included a request for $42.8 million to fund the regular programme of technical cooperation, which appeared to duplicate projects carried out by United Nations entities and should be phased out. With respect to the Secretary-General's proposal to create a reserve fund to deal with additional expenditures arising from currency fluctuations and inflation, the United States believed that it would be better to wait until the dollar strengthened before considering such a mechanism. The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should both be funded exclusively on a voluntary basis. In the case of UNEP, her delegation would seek greater clarification on the proposal for 13 new posts.

12. Although her delegation supported the objective of promoting the decolonization process in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, it believed that it ultimately lay within the authority of the administering Power to determine when its obligations under Article 73 *e* of the Charter ceased. The United States would welcome real progress on the delisting of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and opposed attempts to link the work of the specialized agencies and other organizations to the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Decisions on missions should be taken on a case-by-case basis with the concurrence of the administering Power.

13. Because the convening of groups of governmental experts was threatening to become a substantial and unnecessary drain on the budget of the Department for Disarmament Affairs such groups should be convened only in response to resolutions of the First Committee. Moreover, the United States opposed the troubling practice by which the sponsors of resolutions creating a group of governmental experts convened a second group immediately, without issuing a substantive report.

14. The United States strongly supported the efforts to reform management and increase accountability within the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), but believed that more work should be done on results-based budgeting. However, UNODC had made robust efforts to reduce the number of meetings and reports in accordance with rule 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME), and the resulting increase in voluntary contributions demonstrated the importance attached by the international community to multilateral cooperation to combat terrorism, illicit drugs, organized crime and corruption.

15. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to build a culture of effective management and accountability and establish global strategic objectives, measures and indicators, but urged UNHCR to pay even greater attention to achieving its objectives. The United States sought the abolition of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Division for Palestinian Rights, because both were inimical to the

aim of ensuring that United Nations funds were directed to its highest priorities and towards achieving a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They were also biased, and did not further the international community's goal of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

16. Although the report of ACABQ (A/60/7) contained some interesting observations, her delegation was disappointed that it had not followed through by making action-oriented recommendations to help guide the Committee in its deliberations on the budget. It was also disappointed that ACABQ had not included information on the total dollar impact of its recommendations, as it had in the past. The United States appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to eliminate activities that were no longer useful or which duplicated other activities, and encouraged him to continue those efforts. Rather than wait until the next budget to delete additional obsolete outputs, he should propose outputs for deletion throughout the year.

17. By setting priorities, eliminating obsolete activities, promoting efficiencies and finding creative ways to manage resources, the General Assembly could approve a budget that ensured sufficient resources for the Organization's activities and which included substantial and significant reform measures.

18. **Mr. Song** Young-wan (Republic of Korea) said that in its discussion of results-based budgeting, inputs and outputs, accountability and oversight, the Committee should not overburden the United Nations with too many new requirements. In order to achieve its goals of efficiency and effectiveness, the Committee must take a balanced approach.

19. The Secretary-General should exercise his authority under the Charter of the United Nations to manage the Secretariat effectively, and the Republic of Korea looked forward to receiving his recommendations on budgetary, financial and human-resources policies and rules in the first quarter of 2006. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen oversight through the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and through an independent external investigation. Both mechanisms were valuable tools and their results and recommendations should be taken seriously.

20. The figure of 0.1 per cent real budget growth from the biennium 2004/05 to the biennium 2006/07, provided in the proposed programme budget, was slightly misleading. Since the initial estimate for the biennium 2004/05 had been revised substantially upward, the actual change was closer to 20 per cent. In view of the continued rapid growth in the regular and peacekeeping budgets, it was all the more important to examine how budgetary resources were used and the results achieved with them.

21. In that context, his delegation was pleased to see that results-based budgeting was taking root as a methodology and agreed with ACABQ that the Secretariat should continue to refine it by, for example, adapting the results-based budgeting approach to support and administrative functions and clarifying which outputs contributed to which objectives and accomplishments, and to what extent. It was essential that the process of refinement be both specific and quantifiable.

22. The Republic of Korea welcomed the proposed discontinuation of 3,019 obsolete, ineffective or marginally useful outputs, but noted that some sections of the budget proposal lacked any recommendations for their deletion. It would be useful to know what resources would be made available as a result of discontinuing those outputs. That information should be included in future budget proposals and further reviews should identify still more outputs that could be discontinued without negative effects.

23. Reform was not a one-off event, but an ongoing process. Although the elimination of unnecessary outputs was valuable and would free up budgetary resources for activities of high priority, failure to review outputs on a periodic basis would lead to a renewed accumulation of unnecessary outputs. In that regard, the Republic of Korea also welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to facilitate a review of mandates older than five years, as agreed at the 2005 World Summit.

24. **Mr. Konuzin** (Russian Federation) said that the proposed programme budget should be considered in conjunction with the World Summit Outcome, which had assigned many new tasks to the United Nations, with serious financial implications. The budget proposals were already likely to represent absolute growth of over 5.4 per cent. There were of course objective reasons for the significant increase in United Nations expenditures over recent years, but the scale of the requested resources highlighted the urgent need to increase the Secretariat's efficiency, strengthen budget

discipline, introduce cost-saving measures, and abandon obsolete and ineffective programmes.

25. His delegation had long stressed the need to reduce spending on such items as "consultants", "contractual services" and "travel of staff", but the issue had not yet been effectively addressed. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on reducing such spending and on additional posts in the Secretariat deserved support, and opportunities for further reductions should be sought. The request for increased funding for staff training was unconvincing. His delegation had repeatedly stressed the need for a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of skill-building in the Secretariat, but the criteria for such assessment remained vague.

26. The "maintenance base" concept required serious adjustment. The need to maintain the same level of appropriations should be justified, the priority and effectiveness of programmes reconfirmed, and a thorough analysis made of the actual resource requirements. The existing methodology did not preclude the possibility of "conservation" of non-recurring expenses or adjustments for inflation and currency fluctuations which might distort the comparator base of the expenditures in question.

27. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on staffing and management were quite useful, in particular the ones on the cumbersome recruitment procedures, which adversely affected the level of financing of posts and, what was worse, the effectiveness of programme implementation. At the same time, it was difficult to analyse or control the increasing spending on consultants and temporary assistance. The Advisory Committee's proposals for strengthening the personal accountability of staff members, primarily managers, were extremely important, and the use of such tools as demotion and reassignment was justified.

28. It was not clear why the budget proposals avoided mention of the introduction of the mandatory staff mobility system scheduled for implementation in 2007, since approval of the Secretariat's proposals might result in substantial additional expenditures. Information on the amount of such expenditures would be welcome. His delegation intended to address in the informal consultations the need for further improvement of results-based budgeting and for prioritization and enhanced efficiency in the use of the Organization's limited resources, as well as for enhanced programme evaluation, the application of strict budget discipline, and increased accountability for the Secretariat's managers.

29. No cost-saving measure should result in a deterioration of the services provided by the Secretariat to Member States or contravene the fundamental principles of the United Nations, such as multilingualism and the central role of the intergovernmental bodies. In view of the need to curb the growth in expenditures and since the main objective of the current reforms was to ensure cost-effective implementation of mandates, the new resource requirements derived from the decisions taken at the World Summit should be financed as far as possible from the reallocation of resources.

30. **Mr. Kapoma** (Zambia) said that development was one of the priority areas of the Organization's work, a fact underlined in the outcome documents of recent international conferences. Indeed, an office had been established to solicit support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with the aim of stimulating rapid development through the use of Africa's own resources supplemented by its development partners. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had an important role to play in that undertaking.

31. The increasing use of extrabudgetary resources was worrying because it might result in a budget which did not reflect the development agenda of the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. Activities approved by the General Assembly should be funded in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter and no conditions should be attached to the use of extrabudgetary resources.

32. The year-long time lag in filling vacant posts impaired the Organization's performance. As the Advisory Committee stated in paragraph 64 of its report, programme managers must begin the recruitment process well in advance of planned retirements, so that vacant posts could be filled within 30 days. The post of Special Adviser for Africa, which had been vacant for four months, must be filled as a matter of urgency, since the Office of the Special Adviser had an important role to play in securing support for NEPAD.

33. Another aspect of the recruitment problem was the imbalance in the composition of the Secretariat.

Zambia, for example, was still underrepresented even though qualified nationals had applied for posts. Article 103, paragraph 3, of the Charter must be implemented. His delegation supported the recommendation of ACABQ that nationals should be recruited to the regional economic commissions, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations information centres.

34. Consultants should be used only when in-house expertise was not available and in accordance with section VIII of General Assembly resolution 53/221. Such consultants as were needed should be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

35. It was a matter for concern that the level of appropriation for the Development Account had remained static and that the savings that were expected to be channelled into the Account had not materialized. His delegation would like to know why no additional funds had been allocated to the Account and called for a review of the funding mechanism.

36. With regard to results-based budgeting, some of the performance indicators were not specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). The Organization must perfect the art of results-based budgeting as quickly as possible.

37. Although the revival and development of Africa was that continent's own primary responsibility, it needed the assistance of the international community to carry its development agenda forward. Zambia therefore called for increased resources for the relevant activities and hoped that its cooperation partners would not be found wanting.

38. **Mr. Zongo** (Burkina Faso) said that at the World Summit the Heads of State and Government had reaffirmed their commitment to measures to rid the world of poverty. They had thus underlined their intention to strengthen the United Nations and to take up the challenges of hunger, poverty and the promotion of education and justice. Sufficient resources must therefore be allocated to the reform process in order to improve the effectiveness of the Organization's work and his delegation noted with satisfaction that the proposed programme budget addressed certain elements of the reform. While welcome, however, reform must not divert attention from the development issues that continued to preoccupy the whole of Africa.

39. The proposed increase over the budget of the biennium 2004-05 amounted to less than 0.1 per cent. Three points should be borne in mind in the light of that austerity. Firstly, NEPAD had still not brought about a revival in Africa, whose development partners must therefore reinforce their commitment. Secondly, the situation of ECA was worrying and the Commission must be given sufficient financial resources to attain its objectives. Thirdly, a much larger appropriation should have been proposed for the Development Account.

40. As a landlocked country, Burkina Faso believed that the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action would make a contribution to the development efforts of landlocked and transit developing countries. To that end, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should be given adequate support.

41. The United Nations should adapt itself to the new social and political realities and seek to discharge its commitments and thereby offer hope to the weakest and poorest.

42. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia) said that it was incumbent on Member States to give practical expression to the statement of intent contained in the World Summit Outcome. Indonesia was determined that all mandated activities should be implemented. Critical current challenges needed urgent action in the shape of international and regional cooperation for development, for which adequate resources must be provided. It was important to focus attention on the allocation of the resources requested in the proposed programme budget in accordance with established priorities, with particular emphasis on urgent development activities.

43. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs should therefore be strengthened so that it could provide greater support to the Economic and Social Council. For their part, the regional economic commissions were an important means of promoting regional cooperation and the increased allocation proposed for them was therefore welcome. Humanitarian assistance, particularly in the wake of natural disasters, was another area that required serious attention and additional resources and her delegation noted with satisfaction the proposed increase in such assistance.

44. The increasing use of extrabudgetary resources for core activities must be carefully monitored because of its potential to paralyse development work. It would be far better to fund such activities from the regular budget, which would or course require the payment of assessed contributions in full and on time.

45. **Mr. Tal** (Jordan) said that the Organization must rise to the challenge of an era in which its responsibilities and programmes had expanded, expectations had increased and criticism had intensified. Recent events at Headquarters and in the field had fuelled attacks which had led critics to question the Organization's role. The Fifth Committee was examining the proposed programme budget against that background and must promote reform to improve the ability of the United Nations to fulfil its responsibilities and mandates.

46. While the highest standards of efficiency must apply to the use of available resources, the General Assembly must not shy away from acknowledging that expanded responsibilities led to a commensurate increase in funding. As the main deliberative, democratic body of the Organization, the Assembly played a central role in setting policy, appropriating resources and exercising oversight. His delegation believed in a partnership between the Member States and the Secretariat, but experience had shown many deficiencies in various areas of management. Member States must not confine their role to policy-setting, but must be fully engaged in all areas of management and budgeting.

47. While the discipline exercised in preparing the budget estimates was positive, his delegation would have liked to see a more equitable distribution of the modest increase in resources among budget sections, including sustainable economic development and economic cooperation, which were vitally important to developing countries and had been a focus of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Extrabudgetary resources, an important supplement to regular budget allocations, should be scrutinized as carefully as the regular budget. His delegation was surprised to see that they accounted for 62 per cent of total budget allocations, with a portion being spent on areas that clearly deserved a more stable, continuous and sustainable source of funding, namely, legislative mandates and substantive activities. Increased reliance on extrabudgetary resources for mandated substantive, operational or support activities was not in the interests of the Organization and brought into question the "zero-growth" premise of the proposed programme budget. Despite the emphasis on improving the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness, and despite the human resources management reforms under way, the resources allocated to training seemed insufficient. Acquiring skills and multidisciplinary qualifications should be part of career development.

48. His delegation recognized that the Organization must become lean, agile and able to respond swiftly to challenges and it noted the proposal of the Secretary-General to discontinue over 3000 outputs in accordance with regulation 5.6 and rule 105.6 of the PPBME Regulations and Rules. It nevertheless wondered how those outputs had been selected, how the exercise would streamline the work of departments and what savings would be made. A thorough, non-selective evaluation must be made of all outputs, particularly those whose mandates had not come to an end.

49. The Advisory Committee must continue to play its pivotal role in helping the General Assembly, as provided for in rule 157 of the Assembly's rules of procedure. The integrity of its expert opinions and recommendations depended on the neutrality, independence and impartiality of its members. Among the matters to be addressed in that regard were perceived conflicts of interest, the qualifications of its members and, most importantly, the inequalities in their conditions of service.

50. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that the proposed programme budget for the forthcoming biennium was particularly important not only because it coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations but also on account of the criticisms that had recently been made of the Organization and its financial management, and the doubts that had been cast on its credibility. Under the Charter, the General Assembly and its related bodies had a fundamental role to play in planning the Organization's programme of work and in establishing its budget. It should also have a greater role in determining the financial and human resources of the Organization and in allocating those resources to the various programmes.

51. He welcomed the submission of the proposed programme budget in the results-based format, but the link between inputs and outputs should continue to be highlighted. In all, 3,019 outputs were proposed for

discontinuation, most of them in the economic and social fields. Although that was essential in order to improve programme delivery, caution should be exercised in the discontinuation of activities that might adversely affect the developing countries. His delegation was particularly concerned at the proposed discontinuation of certain outputs on the grounds that they had not been able to attract additional financial resources.

52. The submission of a zero-growth budget was also a matter of concern, particularly at a time when the number of legislative mandates adopted by the General Assembly was increasing, a trend that gave rise to the redistribution of the funds available in the various sections of the budget and to a reduction in allocations to certain activities.

53. With regard to the proposed reforms contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, his delegation looked forward to the Secretary-General's related proposals in a detailed and high-quality document that would enable Member States to take appropriate decisions on improving the work of the Secretariat and enhancing the role of the General Assembly.

54. The Advisory Committee was of crucial importance to the work of the Fifth Committee and its members should therefore act as independent experts rather than as representatives of their States. For that reason, his delegation supported the reform of the Advisory Committee.

55. The regional commissions performed an important role in supporting the Organization's development activities and should therefore be adequately funded from regular budget resources.

56. **Mr. Berti Oliva** (Cuba) said that the task before Member States was to agree, in an atmosphere of full sovereign equality, on the level of resources that the Organization should be given to implement all of its mandated activities. That was a test of the commitment of Member States, as it was useless to assert the Organization's importance to solving current problems if, in practice, it was denied the resources to do so. States which advocated conditions such as budget ceilings and zero nominal growth before they would approve reduced budgets which failed to meet the Organization's needs were showing the true extent of their political will.

57. The principle of zero nominal growth in the proposed 2006-2007 programme budget was difficult to reconcile with the new challenges facing the Organization. While resources must be used efficiently, it was hard to understand how new challenges could be met with a regular budget that did not increase. Member States should be concerned by the growing dominance of extrabudgetary resources over the regular budget. Moreover, development issues accounted for a negligible share of the proposal, and no increase was planned either for the regular programme of technical cooperation or for the Development Account, which recent reports indicated had made substantial savings.

58. The General Assembly had adopted no resolution approving the zero nominal growth approach and the Secretariat should therefore present proposals based on the real needs of the Organization and inform the Assembly of the actual total of resources allocated for 2006-2007. That information would be no more than an estimate, as section 29 of the proposed programme budget had been withdrawn for revision and had not yet been presented to the General Assembly.

59. The proposal of the Secretary-General to eliminate 3,000 obsolete or marginally useful outputs on the basis of regulation 5.6 and rule 105.6 of the PPBME Regulations and Rules was a positive one and proved that genuine implementation of the Regulations and Rules was possible and was not an obstacle to the updating of the Organization's methods. As implementation of those Rules and Regulations had been in response to the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 44 of its resolution 58/270, his delegation was disappointed that the Secretariat had not reported on the matter at the Assembly's fifty-ninth session, responding instead in annex III to the introduction to the proposed programme budget and therefore once again disregarding the deadline for the submission of a report. It was also disappointed that most of the outputs proposed for elimination were in the field of economic and social development.

60. The proposed programme budget for 2006-2007 was the first to be considered since the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/269, that the programme narratives of the programme budget fascicles should be identical to the biennial programme plan. His delegation was concerned at the indication from the Committee for Programme and Coordination that some sections failed to comply with that decision

and that the Committee had been unable to consider some sections because they had not been published when it was in session. His delegation urged that the resolution in question should be interpreted in a uniform and coherent way, and the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be able to consider all the programme narratives in detail.

61. The Advisory Committee performed valuable work, but the delegation of Cuba was concerned that some of the recommendations and observations in its first report on the proposed programme budget (A/60/7) went beyond its mandate and that it had even criticized the work of the General Assembly, which was unacceptable. The Advisory Committee should adhere to its responsibilities and refrain from making politically oriented recommendations which could jeopardize the outcome of intergovernmental debate.

62. Presentation of the proposed programme budget coincided with proposals for the reform of the Organization. His delegation had noted a much heavier focus on reform in the statement of the Secretary-General to the Fifth Committee on 25 October 2005 (see A/C.5/60/SR.12) rather than on a detailed presentation of the proposed programme budget. While the reform process was certainly relevant, the proposed programme budget pre-dated the 2005 World Summit. The General Assembly must therefore discuss and act on the proposals of the Summit Outcome first and only then move on to the budget implications of its decisions.

63. Cuba would resist any effort to make approval of the budget for the forthcoming biennium conditional on the reform initiatives in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It would resolutely condemn and reject any attempt to withhold the assessments of the main contributor, exert pressure on delegations, impose conditions connected with a State's level of assessment, exploit scandal whipped up by one State's media or force through proposals made by a national legislature.

64. **Ms. Zobrist Rentenaar** (Switzerland) said that her delegation was concerned that the proposed programme budget for 2006-2007, being considerably higher than the initial appropriations for 2004-2005, would place a strain on Member States, but realized that it reflected new demands on the Organization, including safety and security and special political missions. Moreover, the regular budget represented less than half of the peacekeeping budget, which was subject to very little intergovernmental scrutiny, and only a fraction of global national defence spending. Despite the general trend towards expansion, the programme budget had grown modestly, with increased sums for priority areas being covered by a reallocation of resources within the approved budget outline. At the end of the day, the budget must provide the resources needed for the Organization to fulfil its mandated activities and achieve its goals.

65. The Advisory Committee's first report on the programme budget (A/60/7) had usefully focused on major management issues of a cross-cutting, structural and thematic nature and provided just the kind of advice which the Member States needed. Her delegation hoped that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would help to bring about a shift away from line-by-line scrutiny of the proposed programme budget towards a more strategic discussion.

66. Her delegation had long advocated a more balanced and predictable funding structure for the sections of the budget dealing with human rights and humanitarian affairs, and was concerned at the large share of operational activities in those fields financed through extrabudgetary funds. Those were core activities of the Organization and should receive adequate funding in the regular budget. The commitment of the 2005 World Summit to double the regular budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights within five years was a long-overdue step in the right direction. For the same reason, her delegation supported the increases proposed for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and for UNHCR.

67. Gender policy and the empowerment of women went beyond the issue of gender balance within the Secretariat. Her delegation was pleased to see more comprehensive mainstreaming of gender into the programme budget and programme managers' greater awareness of the gender-related effects of their work on intended beneficiaries. It also welcomed the measures to improve oversight adopted by the 2005 World Summit. Simply approving additional posts for OIOS was not a suitable response and her delegation would await details of the implementation and financial implications of the reform measures and revised estimates for the section of the budget covering OIOS.

68. Her delegation supported the Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations on ICT, which was catching up to staff costs as a driver of expenditure in the United Nations. Because the Organization's management structure did not reflect the increasing importance of ICT, the establishment of a new senior post of Chief Information Officer was an important step towards instituting and implementing an ICT strategy focusing on further harmonization of the ICT architecture and processes and preparing the ground for a long-overdue system-wide ICT framework.

69. Like the Advisory Committee, her delegation largely agreed with the overall level of the proposed programme budget. It hoped not to spend time on micromanaging budget issues, but rather to focus on strategic priorities and conclude consideration of the proposed programme budget rapidly, with a short and concise draft resolution on the matter. The Committee had an ambitious agenda: the reform measures stemming from the 2005 World Summit must be implemented promptly, with maximum effect and with adequate resources, and attention must be devoted to the capital master plan.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.